serious blow to their strategy, and they saw no reason to change their diplomacy and revise treaties to appease the revolutionaries in Petrograd. Their policy toward Russia was rather to keep her in the war as long as possible and obtain her maximum military support. With this purpose in view the Allied governments, in addition to working through the usual diplomatic channels, entered into direct contact with the Soviet through the representatives of the Socialist parties in the war cabinets.

The Socialists in the European Allied and neutral nations were split. The "majorities" supported the war efforts of their governments, the "minorities" opposed the war, and their extreme left-wing groups followed a defeatist policy. When the Soviet called on the Socialist parties of the Allied nations for joint action to achieve a just peace, it had in view chiefly the right-wing Socialists represented in those governments. But the latter would not side with the Petrograd Soviet without the consent of their governments, and these would not act against the desires of the Provisional Government in Russia. Thus the success of the campaign launched by the Soviet depended, from the very beginning, on the position taken by the Provisional Government.

On the initiative of Tseretelli, the Executive Committee of the Soviet therefore asked the government to renounce officially, in the name of Russia, the imperialist aims of the war and to request the Allies to do the same. This demand met with violent opposition from Miliukov, who believed that the overthrow of the Tsar ought not to affect Russia's foreign policy. But the President of the Government, Prince Lvov, agreed with Tseretelli, and on April 10 the Provisional Government published a declaration of foreign policy in which it stated that the aim of free Russia was not domination over other nations or acquisition of new territory but a durable peace based on the right of all nations to self-determination.

From the point of view of the Soviet, this vague statement could be interpreted as a step toward a peace policy. The problem had another aspect, however. Russia could exert influence on the policy of other belligerent nations only so long as she herself remained belligerent. Disintegration of her armies would force her to sign a separate peace or truce with Germany (which reputedly had been Rasputin's plan), and that would end her participation in the Concert of European Great Powers. Thus the policy of a just democratic peace demanded a vigorous policy of national defense.

This aspect of a peace policy was brought to the attention of the leaders of the Petrograd Soviet at the All-Russian Convention of Soviets that opened in the Tauride Palace on the day the Provisional Government issued its foreign policy declaration. The convention was